



## State Representative Robert Heagney

Dear Friends,

It continues to be an honor and a privilege to serve as your state representative in the Connecticut General Assembly. In 2005, the House of Representatives took up and debated many issues critical to Simsbury and Connecticut residents.

We approved landmark legislation that creates a stem cell research fund, required insurers to cover mammography and MRIs as options for breast cancer screening, and gave worker's compensation benefits to members of the Connecticut National Guard when called to active duty. We also approved an increase of over \$527,000 in state funding to Simsbury.

A number of other issues went unresolved, and action on campaign finance reform was not taken until a special session in autumn.

This report touches on some of the issues we tackled in the session, including the state budget, changes in graduated licensing requirements, eminent domain and government reform.

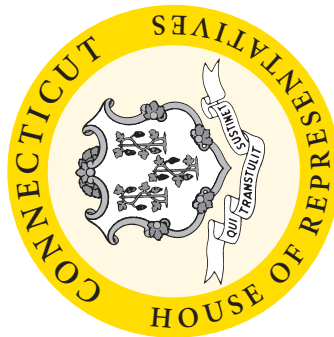
I hope this report is informative. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact my office at any time. Thank you once again, for the opportunity to serve you in the legislature.

Sincerely,



Representative Heagney meets with Simsbury school children in the Hall of the House of Representatives.

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## State Representative ROBERT HEAGNEY Proudly Serving the 16<sup>th</sup> District Simsbury ★ Connecticut



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## 2005 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative  
**ROBERT HEAGNEY**  
Proudly Serving the 16<sup>th</sup> District  
Simsbury ★ Connecticut



Representative Heagney speaks on the floor of the House during the 2005 Legislative Session.

## PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

### Voting for Fiscal Responsibility

The budget that was offered by the majority this year included heavy increases in taxes and spending, as well as a violation of the state spending cap and the squandering of the state surplus. For these reasons, I voted against the budget package.

The budget increases spending 8.9%, neither cuts nor controls any areas of spending, and exceeds and violates the publicly established Constitutional spending cap by \$110 million. It spends \$650 million of the \$700 million surplus, while including \$738 million in new taxes. In my mind it is completely inappropriate to increase taxes when we have a \$700 million surplus. This is particularly true when you consider that we are in the highest taxed state per capita in the entire country.

### Eminent Domain

The issue of the use of eminent domain came to the fore during the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision concerning New London. The court ruled that Connecticut's eminent domain laws are constitutional but stressed that the state could amend them. I believed that action should be taken as quickly as possible considering the sweep and impact of this court decision. I proposed an amendment to ban the taking of private residences through eminent domain. Unfortunately, the Democratic majority defeated my amendment aimed at limiting eminent domain. Thereafter, I joined many of my colleagues in pressing for a special session of the legislature to address this matter and to preserve the private property rights of Connecticut residents. Despite having held weeks of special session, the majority leadership has refused to take up eminent domain.

### Fighting for Fair School Funding

The distribution of education dollars continues to be lopsided. Many of my colleagues and I will continue the fight for fair funding of public education. Currently the state school aid formula now sends \$9,000 per pupil to students in the cities, while suburban children receive state funding as low as \$100. Simsbury will receive \$260,000 more in ECS funds next year. I believe this amount to be inadequate and will fight for more ECS funding for Simsbury.

### For Seniors and Soldiers

This year the legislature passed measures that provide discounted in-state tuition to military personnel stationed in Connecticut. We also supported our troops in the war on terrorism by providing workers' compensation benefits to members of the Connecticut National Guard when called to active duty. Money was allocated to implement the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program, which will work in concert with the ConnPACE program to replace drug benefits currently received under Medicaid. Also, the state's Commission on Aging was moved from the Department of Social Services to the legislative branch.

## Tax Breaks for Home Heating

The legislature passed a measure in special session that exempts the following products from the 6% sales and use tax from November 25, 2005 to April 1, 2006: windows that meet federal Energy Star standards; oil furnaces that are at least 85% efficient; insulation; programmable thermostats; water heater blankets; window film; window and door weather strips; caulking; water heaters, and gas furnaces.

### Campaign Finance Reform

I was appointed as the only House Republican member to participate in the negotiations over a campaign finance bill which was passed with my vote in the spring. The Senate refused to take up this bill. This past summer Governor Rell appointed me to serve on a select reform task force. As co-chairman I worked to hammer out the details. The governor then convened a special session of the legislature to act on our plan; however, this bill was never voted on.

After a month of delays, the Democratic majority finally brought out a flawed partisan bill, rejecting the work done on the reform task force. Their bill does nothing to prevent the kinds of abuses seen in Connecticut, and forces taxpayers to pay for roughly \$20 million a year on political campaigns, instead of on vital public purposes such as education. A number of loopholes in the bill still allows special interest money into the process, and allows party and leadership PACs disproportionate power. Therefore, I opposed the measure.

### Transportation

The Governor's proposal to implement a \$1.3 billion comprehensive transportation restructuring for the state was approved by the legislature this year. This initiative is aimed at improving state highways and interstates, as well as upgrading public transportation. The legislature also passed driving safety measures that limit the use of hand-held cell phones while driving, expand the required use of booster seats for children, and add certain restrictions on teenage drivers to limit teenage driving under conditions which are known to be the most dangerous.

### Patients' Bill of Rights

This year we passed legislation that requires hospitals to notify each patient of the rights he has under the hospital's participation in Medicare. Notification must be made upon the patient's admission and can be made to his guardian or representative as allowed by state and federal law. The notice must be written; specifically state the rights identified in the Medicare conditions of participation; and provide information on how the patient can complain when he believes his rights have been violated, including contacting the Department of Public Health.

### Graduated Licensing

As a father of four children, three of whom are driving, I was pleased that the legislature enacted a measure that requires 16- and 17-year-olds learning to drive under learner's permits to have a minimum of twenty instead of eight hours of behind-the-wheel instruction before they qualify for driver's licenses. It also prohibits licensed drivers of this age from driving between the hours of 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. unless they are travelling because of employment, school or religious activities, or medical necessity. These limitations will insure our young drivers are better prepared to get behind the wheel and phase into night driving, where so many 16-17 year olds have accidents.

## Identity Theft

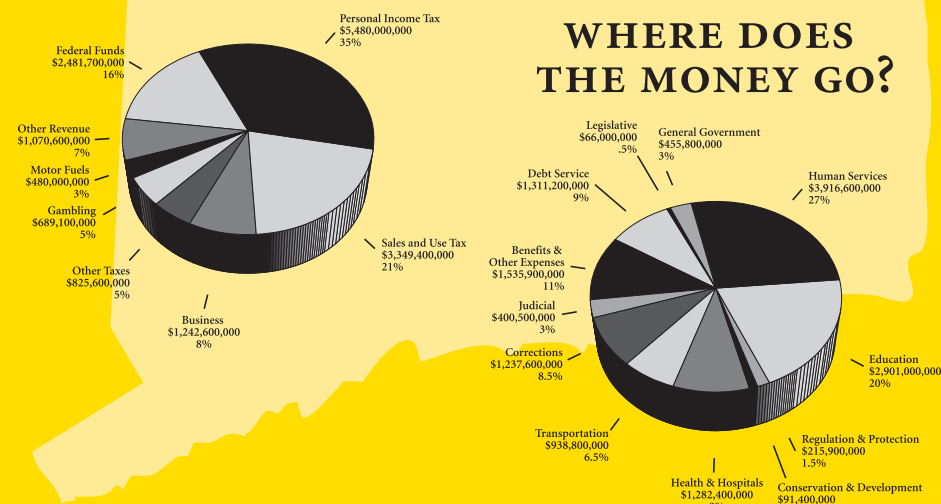
Due to the increased incidence of identity theft the legislature passed a bill allowing consumers to place a freeze on their credit report and requires a credit bureau to place the freeze within five days. The credit freeze prohibits a creditor from giving information to any third party without the creditor's permission.



Representative Heagney confers with Governor M. Jodi Rell on proposed legislation.

## BUDGET ENDING JUNE 30, 2005 THE 2005 GENERAL FUND AND THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND TOGETHER SPEND \$14.4 BILLION

### WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



\*Revenues Exceeded Spending Leaving A General Fund Surplus of \$777 Million